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# Economic and Social Council

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**Commission for Social Development**
**Thirty-seventh session**
9–19 February 1999
Item 3 (a) (ii) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: priority theme: initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit**

## Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America; HelpAge International; International Council of Women; International Federation of Business and Professional Women; Soroptimist International; Zonta International (general); All India Women's Conference; Associated Country Women of the World; Caritas Internationalis; Foundation for the Rights of the Family (PRODEFA); International Catholic Child Bureau; International Confederation of Christian Family Movements; International Council of Jewish Women; International Council of Psychologists; International Federation of University Women; International Kolping Society; Italian Centre of Solidarity; New Humanity; Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for International and Cultural Affairs) (International Movement of Catholic Students); Salvation Army; SOS-Kinderdorf International; World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts; World Movement of Mothers (special); International Association of Charities; European Union of Women; International Inner Wheel; International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling (roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/1999/1.

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*We, the undersigned international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council,*

*Recall:*

That the Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control" (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948, art. 25, para. 1);

That the Declaration on the Right to Development says that "States ... shall ensure, *inter alia*, ... access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income" (General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986, art. 8, para. 1);

*Note* that the second preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 52/81 of 12 December 1997 recognizes "that the basic objective of the follow-up to the International Year of the Family should be to strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions and to build upon their strengths, particularly at the national and local levels";

*Reaffirm* that "ensuring full and equal access to social services, especially education, legal services and health-care services for women of all ages and children, recognizing the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child" (E/CN.5/1996/3, para. 24 (c)) is a main goal in meeting the basic human needs of all;

*We, therefore,*

1. *Consider* that the scourges of unemployment and poverty concern not just individuals but also their families as well as their communities and have an impact on the participation of families in social development;

2. *Consider further* that all social groups and all families, particularly the weakest and most vulnerable, should have full and equal access to basic social services, including counselling, without discrimination;

3. *Emphasize* that the role of families is crucial in providing such services as, *inter alia*, nurturing, education, health care, nutrition, clothing, housing, care of frail elderly and/or disabled members, as well as in ensuring intergenerational exchange and support;

4. *Request* increasing acknowledgement that families need enabling environments and subsidiary social services so that they may fully perform their functions;

5. *Request also* that families be recognized for their central role in community development and that they be resourced and empowered as active participants in social and economic development. This should also allow for the compatibility of employment and family life;

6. *Urge* recognition of the strengths of the individual family in the provision and perspective of services and build upon such strengths to meet family needs in the different stages of the life-cycle of families;

7. *Urge* reconsideration of the basis for access to social services in view of increasingly flexible and insecure employment in a world that tends to ascribe more value to economic activities than to other forms of social participation;

8. *Recommend* the upgrading and/or provision of basic training and schooling for voluntary and unpaid work beyond the family context;

9. *Stress* the need to enhance the cultural participation of families and their economic and social role with respect to the creativity of all, including ethnic minorities;

10. *Urge* for the sake of family stability, the building up of an education for family life that covers the entire lifespan, starting with primary education. The collaboration of the media in this is of utmost importance and should be actively pursued;

11. *Call for* the implementation of cooperation, cross-sectoral networking at all levels of social services, be it family care, external voluntary services or institutionalized social services in a network with as much organizational structure as appropriate;

12. *Welcome* the decision of the General Assembly to hold a special session on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives in the year 2000;

13. *Suggest* as one of the objectives of the follow-up to the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development that a family dimension be included in developmental strategies and policies in all sectors, so as to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the impact of such strategies and policies on the family and also to that of the family's influence on them.